

22 August 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Meeting with Mr. Kirschstein,  
House Select Committee, 18 August 1975;  
OPR Participants:

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1. Mr. Kirschstein explained that his principal interest is in technical collection and its adequacy and value to analysts. As we described to him the character of the OPR research programs and the kinds of questions that we are trying to answer, he realized that technical collection is far less critical to OPR needs than to an office like OSR from which he had just come. He asked, for example, whether there are areas that COMINT fails to cover and whether COMINT had helped us to answer a specific problem. Obviously, better and more complete COMINT reporting would be of enormous assistance to political analysts, particularly on the Communist countries, but it is equally apparent that some of the major inhibitions on COMINT collection are technical, and there is no early prospect that these technical problems will be overcome. We also stated that we did not feel that we were familiar enough with the total product to judge whether the processing of political COMINT receives sufficient priority. We described in a general

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2. Kirschstein then inquired about Clandestine Service reporting and how well it met our needs. We explained that in the case of China it was often critical to our analyses, and in the case of the Soviet Union it was often significant. Otherwise, it depends on the nature of the study. Some of our papers do not rely on any classified information. In other cases CS reporting, although it may not be extensively utilized, may be highly significant in buttressing judgments and evaluations.

3. This led into a discussion of Foreign Service reporting and its importance to the analytical community. We noted that it is difficult to generalize on this subject in as much as its value

at any one point in time varies widely depending on the leadership and staffing at any given embassy. Some Foreign Service officers are more inclined and better suited to carry out diplomatic and representational roles and, from our perspective, their reporting function is slighted. Overall, however, we feel that Foreign Service reporting is and will continue to be a major input to many of our country studies.

4. At the end of the conversation, Mr. Kirschstein wanted to know if we could do an evaluation of U.S. covert action as it has been conducted in the past 25 years, particularly in terms of its long-range consequences. We politely declined the invitation. He also expressed his dismay that we were not doing more work in what he called third-party countries. After discussing this, we discovered what he had in mind was precisely what is being carried on in our International Functional Staff. He had read the food, population, and climate paper and had high praise for it.



Director, Political Research

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